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fined to their homes. A man who does not frequently mix with his fellow men outside the house is branded as the 'man of the oven', while a woman who continually leaves her house is called 'strayer'. Men meet for their spontaneous gathering and gossip outside the house, while women meet inside. While women are expected to adorn themselves with earrings, nose rings, kohl for the eyes, finger rings, anklets, henna for the palms (almost an ornament for every sense), men are supposed to refrain. Moreover while men shave or cut their hair, women leave it to grow as long as possible and never cut it.[1] While men wear pants, women do not; while women's speech is usually sprinkled with words in the diminutive, men are not expected to follow this habit; while women carry things on their heads, men never do so, and only carry things either in the hands, or on the back or shoulders. On walking along the village streets and alleyways, women keep near the wall, while men walk in the middle of the street. Although both men and women are fond of dramatizing their speech, yet they have different stylized ways of doing this. While men use their index fingers as a sign of threatening, women point out with their middle finger. Women grasp their chin or slap their face with open palms for surprise or regret or shame, while men slowly clap their hands. On being angry or hurt, the woman's cry is 'Abouh, abouh . . .' and in joy her shrill cry is 'Wri, ri, ri . . .'. Men are not supposed to utter any cries of joy or anger. In threatening a man will threaten in default to cut off his moustache, while a woman threatens to cut off her head hair. Men and women use different invectives and imprecations as well as different greetings. Women in their speech draw out their words, whereas men end them abruptly. Women do not participate either in individual or communal worship in the mosque as they are excluded altogether from it, but there is no Koranic support for this. On the other hand, they are usually the performers of magico-religious rituals connected with averting the evil eye, bringing about pregnancy, or healing the sick; and men are less engaged in this sphere. It is also interesting to note that, as in Classical Arabic, the dialect of the village attached the feminine 'n' at the end of the verb in the third person feminine plural, a feature which does not occur in most of the urban dialects in Egypt.

Between men and women there is complete avoidance in looking at each other face to face, except in the case of certain kinships specified by the Koran. On meeting men in the street, women have always to turn their heads to one side, and pull their head covering across their face, and men are expected to lower their heads and not stare at women. The sex taboo on looking and talking without reserve does not apply to children till they reach the adolescent stage, when they gradually acquire such norms and begin to observe them as a part of their value system of politeness. On the other hand, very old women and men are freed from such restric-

[1] See Appendix VIII, for a boy who said that he would be ashamed if his hair grew long, presumably because it looks like that of girls.

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865 593 universal experience when a mother has more than one child in her own care'.[1] The peculiar side of it in this community is the way it is acknowledged and its use as an incentive in child development. In this treatment of the manifestations of sibling rivalry and the important part it plays in the formation of personality, no test of the Levy type was administered, but the cultural symbols and condensations were taken to offer ready-made data comparable to Levy's projective test.[2]

It is assumed in Silwa that the knee-baby is always jealous of the lap-baby, and the yard-baby is jealous of the knee-baby, and that this jealousy is irrespective of sex.[3] The absolute order of birth is maintained as the source of sibling rivalry and in the case of the death of the knee-baby, for example, the yard-baby will not be jealous of the lap-baby. The process is thus juxtapositional, each child always rivalling the immediately younger one who is 'above him' and who is also described as the one 'who pushes him away'. Jealousy is also believed to be one-way, as expressed in the [152] apprehensiveness of the older towards the younger, and not the converse, and therefore it is always the older who is jealous of the younger.

It is considered, according to one of my female informants, that sibling rivalry is essential in the process of a child's growth, particularly for the [853] boys. In the case of the first child, the mother usually induces him to suckle by offering her breast to a strange child. My informant went on to tell me of the folk story of the mother who had only one child and did 865 not bear any more. At the age of seven, however, her son displayed the physical and social maturity of a child of four, being a weakling who knew nothing about the world. This retarded growth worried his mother who consulted various people as to the best way of treating him. At last, she was advised by an old woman to send him to another household, which had many children in it, in another village and to keep him there for a year. During the first few weeks the boy used to sit with the other children round a dish of food, without getting sufficient to eat. Thus he was almost starved, his condition deteriorating. After that period, however, his rivalry with the other children was stimulated and he began to compete with them in eating, playing and running errands. Through this method his development accelerated, and as he became lively his mother took him back home.

[862] It is believed that the arrival of a newborn baby helps to free the next oldest baby from his mother and thus assist its weaning, otherwise it would 000 'stick to its mother's neck'. As the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

[1] See William Henry, 'The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Culture-Personality Relations', in *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. XXXV. See also Susan Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children*, London, 1937.

[2] Benjamin D. Paul, 'Symbolic Sibling Rivalry in a Guatemalan Indian Village', in *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LII, 1950, p. 205.

[3] These stages of child development are adopted by Margaret Mead, 'Age Patterning in Personality Development', in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, 1947, pp. 230–40.

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as the terminal baby, or, as it is sometimes

called, the 'last of the bunch', has no rival, it is usually suckled longer and is considered to be more demanding, thus requiring more protection and pampering since its natural growth is not assisted by the stimulus of rivalry. It is true that the last-born child in a family is regarded as spoilt, and in normal social life this fact could be used by others to account for its shortcomings.

It is also acknowledged that the youngest child becomes jealous immediately his mother's abdomen becomes enlarged on pregnancy and he is usually told of the forthcoming event. The mother hums phrases expressing her sympathy with the child's jealousy and anxiety in store for him. The custom, though not so common now as it was twenty years ago, is for the older child after the birth of a new baby to wear round its neck one, two, or three cubes of sulphur called cubes of jealousy, wrapped in a piece of leather. This is supposed to minimize the dangers of excessive jealousy, as although jealousy is a healthy drive for growth, its excess might have ill effects on the child. It could induce diarrhoea, swellings, lack of appetite, temper tantrums, and sleeplessness.[1]

Such symptoms of illness caused by jealousy are diagnosed, and a traditional cure is administered by the mother, grandmother or an experienced old woman. The cure is called 'kurfa', which literally means something that dispels aggressiveness and sulkiness. The 'kurfa' consists of an egg fried in oil with garlic and spices which is given to the child to eat, usually when his suckling sibling is asleep. Now the jealous child is in complete possession of his mother's attention; she feeds him on the 'kurfa', while he sits on her lap. He is told of how 'awful' his sibling is, and how 'nice and grown-up' he himself looks. After finishing his egg, the child's body is rubbed with the same cooking oil to ease the tensions of envy in his body. These titbits of food represent the few instances in which the knee-baby is allowed to recapture fully his mother's love and to dethrone his younger sibling. It is a symbolic acceptance of a break in the normal behaviour of the knee-baby, rewarded by regressive gratification. This 'kurfa' meal is a propitiatory means of enabling the older child to withstand the strains of sibling rivalry, and to accept the newborn baby with whom he has to identify himself later, either by looking after it or by taking it out to play. Such propitiation becomes more significant in the process of growing up when it is realized that the child is not allowed to manifest his anxiety over, or his deprivation from, his mother on pain of punishment. Such states of temper, tantrums or sulkiness are sometimes dealt with by the mother pretending to strike the younger baby who is the cause of the child's troubles. The great deal of roughness and aggression displayed in children's play outside the home could be considered as a cultural outlet for some of their repressed hostility towards their siblings and parents.

[1] 'Swelling and outbursting' are used figuratively in the villagers' language to denote jealousy. Especially in women's altercations, one hears the phrase, 'You have a swelling from me', meaning 'you are jealous'.

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Koran, and readings of the Prophet's birthday story. During all this, the children would either be sitting behind the adults or clustered in one of the corners of the house ready to execute their elders' commands.

Later on, the actual circumcising of the boy takes place. The child is now the centre of attention. He sits on the ground with a colourful girl's headcloth round his neck, while the village barber shaves his head, a task which should occupy him for three or four hours before performing the operation. Meanwhile, as the women are rejoicing by singing and playing on the tambourine inside the house, the father's invited relatives and friends would be bringing along their contributions (nakout) of money or of corn. Every time the father receives a contribution, he tells an announcer, who is a specialist for this job, that so-and-so has delivered his contribution. The announcer in a chanting voice declares that so-and-so, adding his relationship to the child if he is a close relative, or just adding paternal uncle or maternal uncle, has presented the 'bridegroom' with silver and gold, and entreats God to compensate him with all the good things in the world. The name of one contributor might be announced more than once, and this depends on the amount of contribution, and the closeness of relationship to the child. After each contribution, the village barber shaves, or at least pretends to shave, a little more of the boy's hair. When the father sees that all those whom he has invited or expected to contribute have arrived, the announcer retires, by which time the barber has finished shaving the boy.[1] Then the actual circumcision takes place by seating the child on a large vessel. The instruments for the operation are nowadays given to the barber by the Ministry of Health as well as instructions and ointment for the post-operative treatment.

Just before the operation begins, the child casts off the girl's headcloth and puts on a new garment consisting of an open white shift covered by another open green garment, similar to the type of dress which a religious person is expected to wear on certain occasions. During the operation, the boy is encouraged not to cry or show any signs of pain, otherwise he would be accused of girlishness. He is held back, and forcibly prevented from looking at his penis, otherwise it is believed he would become impotent.

This is immediately followed by a procession of men and boys followed by women and girls to visit the mosque, after which a group of female relatives and friends of the mother, together with the children, take the child to gaze on the Nile water. During all this, sweets, dates, and peanuts would be distributed. For a whole week the child, wearing charms round his neck, is not encouraged to walk, and is fed not so much on bread or meat, but mainly on boiled eggs, dried peas, salted peanuts and rice.

After a week or ten days, the circumcised boy is taken with other boys on a round asking for the 'custom' (al-'ada) from relatives and neighbours, and friends in the village. On this occasion all the boys carry palm-tree

[1] If the boy is too young for a head shave, his older brother or cousin may take his place.

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The alignment of the child with its sex could be also inferred from the fact that during the ceremony the boy wears a girl's headcloth, symbolizing his last chance of indulging in any activity which is not deemed fit for males.[1] This influence has been brought to the writer's mind by the barber's comment; while wrapping the headcloth round the boy's neck, he says: 'Let us put this female cloth around you, and by making you look like a girl tonight, you will be able to avert the evil eye.' This is also obvious in the expected behaviour of the boys not to cry or show any signs of pain during the operation, in order to whiten the father's face, while the girls in contrast are expected and allowed to cry. That the difference in the expectation is due to the fact that the girl's operation is more painful than that of the boy, and hence justifiable, is one way of looking at it, but it is undoubtedly a reflection of the expected ethos of the two sexes.[2] Endurance of pain is a heroic action of the male, while crying and weeping is only expected from women. The difference of 'ethos' between the two sexes reflects itself also in their public attitudes towards a person's death. While the men solemnly gather in the guest house for the obsequies, and public demonstration of weeping is only expected from them on their return journey to the guest house after the burial, the women express their grief in almost hysterical weeping, wailing and dirging.

During the circumcision ceremony the boy's aggression is however allowed to express itself during the procession that follows the operation, as while he is carried on his way to the mosque and the Nile, he is allowed to break an egg by throwing it at any person in the procession. On the other hand, the girl is given free scope in crying, screaming and asking for help.

One cannot fail to see the connection between circumcision and marriage, the former being a preparation for the latter, and the similarities between the public celebration of the two events are striking, as will be shown later in discussing the marriage ceremony. A circumcised boy or girl is normally referred to as 'bridegroom' or 'bride' in anticipation of their future role in life. The connection between circumcision and marriage is also obvious from beliefs and rituals common to both events; the circumcised boy as well as the bridegroom must visit the mosque or gaze on the Nile. The belief is that on his or her circumcision or wedding, a person could be deprived of fertility and potency, and hence great care must be taken to avoid the evil eye, and to avoid those who are sterile and desire fertility, who may well seize the opportunity to use or cross over the circumcised or married man's instruments and clothes. The connection between circumcision and fertility could be also inferred from the

[1] Edward Lane mentions that during his time boys used to be dressed in girls' garments in the circumcision ceremony. *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 59.

[2] The word 'ethos' here is used in the sense in which Bateson has defined it as 'the culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and the emotions of individuals'. Naven, p. 220.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

Parents also scare their children by threatening them with dangerous creatures like scorpions and snakes. They scold them by saying: 'May you be bitten by a scorpion or a snake.' Apart from the fact that such scolding may be taken as a warning against the danger of such creatures, it is considered as a frightening threat to the children. Some children told me that they would prefer their parents swearing at them by the snake rather than by the scorpion. They told me that the reason for their hatred of the scorpion is that it was a wicked creature, which stings ruthlessly and indiscriminately, whereas the snake bites only when it is provoked. An older lad present remarked that the scorpion is the enemy of Moslems. He related that once upon a time a snake curled round a man's leg and yet nothing dangerous happened to the man; then a scorpion passed by and bit both the snake and the man, and caused their deaths. In the same gathering of boys, one of them told me that he actually saw the 'silowa' passing by him while he was sleeping near the harvest. He went on to say that after it had quenched its thrist, it gave a terrifying sound before going to its dwelling in the hills.

During childhood the instilling of fear is one of the expedients that parents constantly use to repress their children and make them docile. Yet I noticed that older boys, as well as adults, were highly ashamed of admitting fear of anything; to be courageous like a lion is the sign of a daring male, while for a girl, timidity is not a defective trait. One might suggest, in the light of Bateson and Mead's findings in Bali, that the horrifying mythical images of 'silowa' and 'ghool' are a cultural projection of the ambivalent feeling towards the parents, the 'silowa' symbolizing the mother, and the 'ghool' representing the father. Parents are thus represented as being both loving and affectionate as well as frightening and devouring.[1] Children also tell the story of the enticing man who comes to them while asleep, wakes them up, offers them dates, and leads them to an unknown world in the mountains. During the journey he reiterates that the child's mother is in front of him, and whenever the child asks about his mother he is always told that she is waiting at a short distance ahead. Thus the enticing man, by taking the children away from their homes, devours them when he feels secure.

Fear responses were quite striking during the Rorschach testing of the children as revealed by the frequent occurrence of responses such as 'silowa', 'ghool', 'scorpion', 'snake', 'wolf', 'fire', and 'blood', many of which do not actually match the blots chosen.

Moreover in the dreams of both boys and girls, the manifestations of fear, repression, and anxiety cannot escape one's notice, however one interprets these dreams. In boys' dreams, one comes across images of a child afraid of the village barber cutting off his head, the ground on which the boy is lying sinking down, a boy being chased by older people, another boy being stung by a scorpion and his family wailing for him, and so on,

[1] See also Chapter VIII on 'Children's Tales'.

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contours with extra pieces of cloth, in the downcast look of boys when speaking to an adult, a well-known characteristic of this stage of development. The writer also noticed on many occasions adolescent boys who were either enraged or ashamed on seeing their mother sitting with relatives outside the house at night, others who threw dust at their adolescent sisters and even married sisters when looking outside the house without proper covering, even when no man was passing by. When sisters become 'a shame' in the matter of going out fetching water or running errands, adolescent boys do not object to taking over some of these duties.[1] The writer also noticed an adolescent boy who, rebuked by his mother on the grounds of his 'mature age' and 'the smell of his pubic hair', flared up with rage and wept. This may be an extreme case, but it is indicative of the excessive shame and apprehension connected with sex. Obviously girls have not much scope for venting the pressures of sexual repressions, and they become more sullen and apprehensive than the boys, but not for long, as they are soon to get married. This excessively repressive and restrictive discipline over sex marks out the process of growing up in this community under study from Taleland and Samoa, where the attitude towards sex is much more permissive.

At this juncture it is appropriate to apply Kardiner's constructs concerning the effect on the basic personality structure of the way a culture satisfies the individual's dependency cravings, which are biologically determined. It seems that this excessive prohibition on sexuality at the stage of adolescence is a social discipline imposed to create and perpetuate the attitude of timidity and dependence of the growing individuals on their seniors. To obey such a discipline is a method of ingratiation, and of establishing conditions for being loved, protected and socially accepted. Thus it works as a lever which parental authority manipulates to make children acquiescent and dependent and as a social technique for minimizing initiative and ambition.[2] These exaggerated cravings of dependency and their concomitant consequences of the inflation of the parental image and social conformity probably explain the psychological undercurrents lying behind the great indifference to social change in this village as well as in many other similar communities in Egypt.

To what extent do inordinate sibling rivalry and excessive shame and

[1] See Appendix VIII, where one of the adolescent boys evinces his shame at his sister's growing breast.

[2] This is based on Kardiner's explanation that restrictive sex discipline creates instead of a friendly attitude to the impulse, one of anxiety which is in 'anticipation of danger'. 'Instead of the self-confidence and the idea "I can get pleasure by and from myself", there appears an exaggerated idea of the cruelty of the forbidding parent. Instead of the attitude of self-confidence, the opposite develops—a lack of it, together with an inordinate increase in dependency and timidity.' He further maintains that interference with sexual development creates exaggerated dependency, the inflation of the parental image, an overvaluation of the boons of dependency, and the encouragement of secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering disciplinarian. *The Individual and His Society*, p. 28.

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ADOLESCENCE, SEX AND MARRIAGE

guilt, especially with regard to sex, produce the psychological disposition to sexual jealousy institutionalized in this community as well as in many other communities in rural Egypt? It is well known that in Egypt disputes over land, water and women rank as three of the most common causes of crime.[1] This does not mean that sibling rivalry and sex prohibitions are the only causes, but seem to provide the psychological field for the moral and religious values connected with fidelity and the propriety of sexual jealousy. A woman is identified not only with 'shame' but also with 'honour' and to preserve one's honour is tantamount to avoid exposure to shame.[2]

These attitudes, according to Kardiner, would also help to understand the dichotomy of sexes and to prevent sexual jealousies from coming out to open hostilities. They also appear to be one of the weapons of social equilibrium and of preserving in-male and in-female solidarity.[3]

Here it is also possible to give some satisfactory answer to the connection between the nature of the community and its demands on individuals as represented by sexual regulations. The central and principal quality in a polite (muaddab) or virtuous person is his conformity to the norms governing sexual behaviour; the flouting of which in any manner would condemn him as impolite and vicious irrespective of his other qualities. Morality and virtue are primarily connected with stringent sexual controls. The villagers, although envying the city dwellers their material comfort, deplore their moral laxity, e.g. women's emancipation in dress, love affairs, use of cosmetics, women's participation in men's work. In this community I heard of no cases of adultery or illegitimate children for the last thirty years, though cases of homosexuality and jokes about sexual pleasure from animals are not uncommon amongst the adolescents and young men. Stringent sexual controls are an essential agent for the maintenance of solidarity, the cohesion and the orderly living of a group with its puritanic religious code and its social organization based, among other things, on a clear-cut sex dichotomy.[4]

Whatever views may be held about the psychological problems connected with adolescence in Silwa, this stage is certainly the prologue to the full status of adulthood which is eventually attained by marriage. Marriage, after circumcision, marks the greatest ceremonial occasion in the individual's life. The best way of describing marriage conditions in Silwa is to give an account of a marriage ceremony which the writer

[1] Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, 1948.

[2] Cf. J. C. Flugel, *Men and their Motives*, London, 1943, and Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, where he writes: 'The ultimate source of the fear and guilt that lie behind all these reactions (of sexual jealousy) is the relationship to another potential man and it is derived from the boy's unconscious fixation on childish attitudes; it is hard for him to "picture" a woman quite apart from another man to whom she secretly belongs.' p. 483.

[3] A. Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 476–7.

[4] See Margaret Read, 'The Moral Code of the Ngoni and their former Military State', in *Africa*, Vol. XI, 1938.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPTIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR INHABITANTS

THE natural barriers of Egypt (Fig. 1) have enabled the inhabitants, particularly those of the upper country, to live in comparative isolation throughout the whole of their history. On the north side lies the sea, along the east and west sides stretch vast, almost waterless deserts, while to the south ingress by way of the Nile is impeded by a series of cataracts. Their geographical isolation has doubtless been responsible for the characteristic conservatism of the Egyptian peasants. This conservatism is particularly apparent in their religious and social customs and their commoner industries, which, as will be more especially seen in the final chapter, have remained almost, if not entirely, unchanged from Pharaonic times.

The vast solitudes of the deserts are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset (see Fig. 2). Fear of hyenas, and, still more, fear of *ʿafārīt*,[1] forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day.

The deserts have proved themselves valuable defences against invasion, the peoples who conquered the country at different periods of its history having usually entered it from the north-east. These invaders do not seem to have left any very marked impression on the physical aspect of the Upper Egyptians at any rate; most of these still bear a striking facial resemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the land whom we see depicted on the walls of the temples and tomb-chapels and in the portrait-statues of the Old,

[1] See Chapter XIV.

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The influence of the deserts may be seen in Egyptian folk-tales, many of which tell of encounters there with *afārīt* and other supernatural beings. Secret caves in "the mountain," as the people call the steep, sometimes almost precipitous ascent to the high-desert plateau, also enter into the adventures recounted by the village story-tellers; these 'caves' are, of course, the ancient rock-hewn tomb-chapels with which the outer face of "the mountain" is in some places honeycombed (see Fig. 3).

Egypt is a land of contrasts, the marked difference between the very fertile Nile Valley and the arid, waterless deserts on either

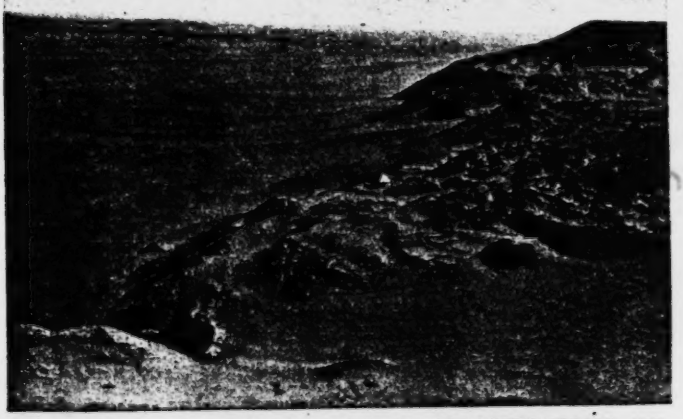

FIG. 2. EDGE OF THE HIGH-DESERT PLATEAU, THE LOWER DESERT, AND IN THE DISTANCE THE CULTIVATION

side of it striking the eye of every visitor to the country. These physical features are, I think, reflected in the character of the peasants, for it is a remarkable fact that the most divergent traits of character can be seen in a single individual. The Egyptian peasants, in spite of much poverty and sickness, and with few amusements to break the monotony of their lives, are as a whole a wonderfully cheerful and contented people. They are very quick of comprehension, of ready wit, dearly loving a joke, even if directed against themselves, usually blessed with a retentive memory, light-hearted, kindly, and very hospitable; they are also very hard-working. At the same time they are very emotional, highly strung, most inflammable, generally very ignorant, and nearly always conspicuously lacking in self-control.

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Thus a man normally of a quiet, gentle, and peaceful disposition may on the spur of the moment commit some brutal murder. One year when I was staying in a small, out-of-the-way village in Upper Egypt a man killed a neighbour in a terrible way because he had stolen some onions from his (the murderer's) field. The moment after he had committed the crime he was weeping over the body of his victim!

One of the besetting sins of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* is jealousy, which often becomes such a raging passion that a jealous man or

FIG. 3. THE FACE OF "THE MOUNTAIN" AND ENTRANCES TO ANCIENT TOMB-CHAPELS

woman is rendered capable of committing any violent crime. The women are liable to be jealous of one another's children, the wives about their husbands, the men of each other's prosperity or position, and so on to an endless degree. I do not wish to imply that jealousy is uncommon in other parts of the world, but I certainly think that it has a large share in the general make-up of the Egyptian character.

Again, the love of money tends to make them very avaricious, and is the cause of many serious troubles among them. On the other hand, they are capable of, and often actually perform, most generous actions, both in the giving of money and in the forgiveness of an injury. Quarrels between individuals, occasionally very violent ones, are common in the villages, but if a judicious

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places his family would at once lose their position, and they would be looked down upon as nobodies. To our Western ideas such restrictions are apt to be regarded as a form of tyranny, but it is not a fair judgment. Seclusion is partly a sign of respect among Egyptians, and indicates the value that the men put upon their womenfolk. Most of the women have unfortunately a difficult and dangerous temperament, which, until they have learnt self-control, and have been inspired with higher ideals, makes them anything but an elevating influence in village society.

Though theoretically they are supposed to be entirely in subjection to the male sex, in practice they can, and often do, maintain a very firm hold on their husbands. I have known many men who are in mortal terror of their wives. Indeed, I am often inclined to think that it is the poor oppressed Egyptian *man* who has a claim to my sympathy, and that the over-ruled, oppressed wife is somewhat of a myth.

More often than not a man marries a girl from his own village, the favourite marriage being with a daughter of his father's brother. On the smallest provocation, some imagined slight, for example, a girl will run off to her father's or brother's house, and remain there until her husband, from fear of mischief being made against him in the village by his wife's relations, is induced to agree to do whatever his wife demands of him. She may require him to buy her gold earrings, a nose-ring, an anklet, or fine clothes, and, though a poor man, he may feel obliged to purchase one or more of these articles for fear of what his wife may do. Many men have run into debt for such reasons.

A man of my acquaintance, who owns a certain amount of land and is by way of being one of the rather superior people of his village, divorced his wife a year or two ago. She was quite a decent woman, but, her relations being poor, she had no land of her own, and, moreover, her husband's brother had died, bequeathing his widow a *feddān* (acre) of land and a little money. My acquaintance had his eye on this land, which was family property, belonging originally to his father, and the only way he could obtain it was by marrying his brother's widow. He did not want to have two wives, for it is expensive to keep up such an establishment ; also, monogamy is becoming much more common in Egypt, and to have more than one wife is looked upon as rather barbarous even among the peasants. The only thing to do was to get rid of his first wife.

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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

159 593 I fancy that there was really no just cause for the woman's jealous suspicions. However, she has reduced her husband to a state of abject fear lest he may arouse her anger—though I did hear that on one occasion he had plucked up sufficient courage to exercise his 'rights' as a husband, and so had administered a whipping for some fault she had committed!

462 241 With regard to the division of labour among the sexes, the men certainly have the hardest and largest share, the most strenuous work in the fields being invariably done by them. The women and girls join their menfolk in the cultivation after the sun has risen, but their work is usually confined to the gathering of dry roots, tending the cattle, fetching the water for the household (Fig. 16), and so on. Of course, living is simple among the peasants, so that very strenuous work for the women is not necessary. Much, however, that might be done by them is neglected simply because they are without training in domestic duties and do not realize what important work lies to their hands.

462 515 It is, of course, very difficult for the peasants to be as clean as they should be. All the water has to be fetched by the women, often from some distance. No water is laid on in the villages, no bathrooms exist, and the houses lack the most ordinary domestic offices. Excuses must, therefore, be made for the Egyptian women, who have had none of the advantages of the poorest [709] woman in England. The instinct of the Egyptian *fellāḥīn*, however, is to be clean, and the religion of Islām commands ablutions. A man will almost instinctively strip and bathe if he happens to [834] be near a canal or the river, but this privilege is denied to the women, as modesty forbids their bathing in public.

854 562 One of the most crying needs in Egypt is that both girls and women should have instruction in the care and upbringing of children. The children undergo a great deal of unnecessary suffering during the early years of their infancy; not because their mothers are lacking in affection, for Egyptian women are, as a rule, devoted mothers, but because they are so hopelessly ignorant.

[164] The results of such ignorance more often than not leave an indelible mark on the child, such as defective eyesight or even absolute blindness. To prevent or cure disease in their children the women 854 will go to one magician after another and purchase from them 1789 amulets and written charms, not grudging for a moment the ex- 1755 penditure of what may be to them considerable sums of money.

[Text continues on page 42]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER III

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

LOVE of personal adornment seems to be instinctive in the human race, and it has probably existed in some form or another as an element in human character from the earliest times. The beautifying of the person may be achieved in a variety of ways, sometimes involving mutilation of the body. A study of the true inwardness of ornaments and personal decoration in general is most instructive, and may serve a useful purpose on occasions, as I hope to show later.

The simple jewellery of the modern Egyptian peasants, and their body-markings, such as tattooing, supply material for an interesting chapter in the study of these people.

The *fellāḥeh* (peasant woman) is by no means more backward than the average Englishwoman in her endeavours to make the most of whatever personal attractions she may possess, and, as I have stated, her demands for gold and silver ornaments may involve her unfortunate husband in considerable financial embarrassment.

The young girl, usually a mere child, who is on the look-out for a husband often wears a necklace of particular shape, made of gold coins. It is quite an attractive ornament, and also serves as an outward and visible sign of her wealth. A man when about to marry may present his bride with such a necklace, investing some of his money in it, for the women's jewellery is often regarded as a safe form of investment, which can easily be turned into ready cash should the necessity arise. Every girl has her ears and nose bored at a fairly early age, when she becomes the proud possessor of a pair of earrings (Fig. 18, bottom), as well as of a nose-ring (Fig. 18, in centre of necklace). These may be of gold or silver, or, in the case of the poorer people, even of brass. Anklets may be of silver-gilt, silver, or some white metal. Bracelets are usually much in request, and are made of glass of various colours (Fig. 18, extreme left and right), of small beads woven together to form a

[Text continues on p. 49]

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ground upside down—*i.e.*, with the sole uppermost. This will make the disputants quarrel violently, and finally they will resort to blows. As soon as the bricks are taken apart or the shoe replaced on the foot of its owner the quarrelling will stop. My informant himself had witnessed an experiment of this kind. A friend of his, seeing two men arguing in the cultivation, placed one of his shoes, sole upward, on the ground. The disputants immediately started a violent quarrel, hitting out and striking each other. Then the friend replaced the shoe on his foot, and at once the quarrel ceased.

The belief is that when people start quarrelling their *aḳrān* come up above the ground and quarrel also. They are, of course, invisible, but they see the bricks or the shoe, as the case may be, and as long as the bricks remain together, or the shoe remains on the ground, they will continue to fight. As long as the *aḳrān* quarrel the people to whom they belong must quarrel too.

Again, a man's *ḳarīn* marries the *ḳarīneh* of his wife, and when a man or woman dies his *ḳarīn* or her *ḳarīneh* dies also. I had been informed of these facts several times, and the reality of the belief was brought home to me in the following way. An Egyptian friend of mine died some three and a half years ago, and I was sitting with his wife one day after his death when a woman magician came to pay us a visit. I suggested a *séance*, whereupon the magician seated herself in a corner of the room and asked for a blanket, with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning her familiar and some of the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician my friend's wife asked her to inquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarīn*.

" Oh," was the reply, " he is dead also, and your *ḳarīneh* is a widow."

The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the subterranean beings spoke through her.

As I have stated above, the *aḳrān*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. Most of the Egyptian peasants are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real

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terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarîneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarîn* or *ḳarîneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarîneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarîneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarîneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarîneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarîneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrân* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarîneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigâb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

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in number, sometimes of different colours, are procured, and a different name is inscribed on each. All these candles are lighted at once, and the name on the candle which burns the longest is the one eventually bestowed on the child. After it has received a name the birth is entered in the Government archives, the name of the child's mother only being given; the father's name is not entered at all.

Boys are more highly valued than girls, and special precautions have to be taken when a male child is born to protect him from the evil eye. Sometimes the midwife is bribed to keep the sex of the child a secret, and if she is paid a sufficiently large sum of money she will consent to give out to the villagers that the child is a girl. I was told of a case of a woman who had given birth to a boy not knowing the sex of the child until it was thirty days old or more, and her husband was equally ignorant.

As a further protection from the evil eye a boy is often dressed as a girl for two years or so, all the villagers, presumably, being led to think that the child is a girl.

Women are supposed to suckle their children for two years, but if a woman again conceives before the end of this period she must, of course, wean her last-born child. When this happens she hangs a 'date of jealousy' round the child's neck to prevent its being jealous of the baby when it is born. I once witnessed a most frantic display of jealousy on the part of a very young child when he saw his mother with the newly arrived infant in her arms. He flung himself upon her in a fury of envious rage. The 'dates of jealousy' in some parts of Egypt are acorns; in other parts they are made of a kind of earth moulded into the form of a date stone.

If a child cries very much the mother will sometimes purchase a very small copy of the Ḳorān and hang it round the child's neck. It is believed that if the child begins to cry and then looks at the Ḳorān which it is wearing it will immediately stop weeping. Such small editions of this sacred book are also worn by a child to keep it well and to ensure its living. When used for this purpose the book is sewn up in a cotton case.

If, after long waiting, a woman at last bears a son a festival, or *mūlid*, is held. There are various kinds of *mawālid* (plural of *mūlid*) held for different reasons and on various occasions, and among them is that held in celebration of the birth of a son. It is a kind of thanksgiving on the part of the parents, and is also

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

E [29] [532] [142]

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

E C [262]

F C [465]

E [152]

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

I myself witnessed the performance of the rite in Fayûm Province, where the proceedings were simpler. The child whose tufts were to be removed was taken to the tomb of the sheikh Umbārak, to whom they had all been dedicated. The barber arrived and shaved off the hair just within the entrance to the tomb. On this occasion the child was held by the sister-in-law of the child's mother, but I do not think there is any fixed rule as to who should act in this capacity. There was no feast or dancing, but such festivities may take place also in this province, though they are not necessary, as I was told was the case in Asyūṭ Province. The child's mother is a friend of mine, and as I paid the barber's fee myself I managed, with the assistance of the woman who held the child, to secure half the hair that had been cut off. The cut-off hair is always buried outside the tomb or mosque where it has been cut off, and is put in the ground either loose [1] or else is first enclosed in a clay ball. On the occasion when I was present at this ceremony the hair was enclosed in a clay ball and buried outside the sheikh Umbārak's tomb, and half was kept back and put in another clay ball and presented to me. The ball in my possession is somewhat flattened at the base, owing to the fact that the clay of which it is made was rather moist, and the placing of the ball outside the house to sun-bake naturally flattened that portion which rested on the ground.

As stated above, Coptic parents take their children to have the tufts removed at the church or churches, or sometimes it may be to the tomb or tombs, of the saint or saints to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated. The priest, as has also been stated, officiates as barber, the father presenting a gift of money to the church or churches where the tufts are removed. On such an occasion a special service is held at the church, and oxen and fowls are killed outside the building, the meat, together with bread, being distributed among the assembled crowd of friends and the poor. If the parents are not rich enough to supply such a munificent feast they will bring a smaller quantity of meat with them, and will distribute it and the bread to the crowds which always collect outside the building on these occasions; in such cases no sacrifices are made. Among the Copts no dancing takes place at this ceremony as among the Muslims, but the women utter the cries of joy (*zaghārīṭ*), and there is a good deal of singing.

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, Pl. E, Fig. 4.

THE FELLĀḤIN OF UPPER EGYPT

832 a piece of paper lying on the ground under one of the palm-trees. He picked it up and saw that it was a charm of some kind. He cannot read or write, but he can sign his name, and he noticed that his name was written on this charm. One of the Government *employés* who lives near by has a considerable knowledge of such matters, so my servant took the paper to him. The man read it and said that it was a charm written to make my servant love the girl mentioned above. It had been placed high up in the palm-tree, but had not been securely tied to the branch, and so had fallen on to the ground. However, it would not have been effective in any case, as the name of my servant's father was written in it, and not the name of his mother, which must always be inserted in such charms. The man said that it was a charm of terrible potency, and that, but for this slip, due probably to their not knowing the mother's name, it would have been disastrous in its effect! Unfortunately, my servant tore it up before he told me about it. I reproached him for not giving it to me, as he knew I was anxious [152] to collect such things, but he was obviously frightened, and felt that he must destroy it. I may mention that this young man is now safely married to one of his cousins.

582 As I have stated before, the girls when they have reached 583 marriageable age are more restricted in their freedom. If there 584 is an unmarried cousin, especially one in the paternal line, a girl is usually married to him. When a marriage is contemplated the relatives of the two parties discuss how much money either is prepared to provide. When this has been settled the prospective bridegroom, or rather his father, pays the bride-price agreed upon to the bride's parents. They then repair to the *ḳāḍi*, as the village judge is called, and he writes out the agreement between the two parties. The couple are now betrothed, a betrothal, as I have already stated, being almost as binding as a marriage.

585 Among the Muslims there is no religious ceremony at a wedding, for with them marriage is not regarded as a sacrament; the actual marriage takes place when the bride goes to her husband's house. The bride is usually, so I am told, taken to her husband's house at sunset, but I have often seen her being conveyed thither in the daytime. She is usually taken there on a camel, being seated in 585 a sort of tent-like erection fixed on to the animal's back, and she 492 is accompanied by some of her girl friends. This erection sways from side to side as the camel walks along. Other camels, with

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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887 586 who must consummate the marriage. After this, if the parties agree, they can be divorced, and the original husband can marry the woman again.

The old man begged me to see if I could do anything to help him, but I told him that there was nothing I could do, and that, in any case, at his age he ought no longer to be contemplating marriage, but had better direct his thoughts to preparing himself for death. I was told by some of the villagers that the divorced wife had been to a magician, who had written a charm to make the old man mad with love for her. Nearly every time I went to this village I found the old man mooning about the street near the house where his divorced wife was staying, and the villagers told me that he was always sitting there, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the woman, and that on market days he would buy her presents of meat and material for dresses, which he left at her house. I made the acquaintance of the wife, a tall, rather fine-looking woman. She appeared to be very happy and cheerful, and quite amused at the display of love on the part of her late husband. Just before I left Egypt there were rumours that her son by a former marriage, a grown-up man with a wife and family of his own, was negotiating for the marriage of his mother with another man! If this takes place I fear the worst for my poor old friend!

791 832 [291] 431 152

FIG. 43. DIVORCED WIFE OF THE OLD MAN

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CHAPTER VI

FERTILITY RITES

RITES to ensure the birth of children are practically world-wide, and are of great variety. The failure to produce offspring involved the weakening of the tribe, which in early times depended upon its numerical strength for its defence against hostile neighbours. Hence the importance of the possession of children, especially of the male sex.

Love for their children is a marked trait in the character of the modern Egyptians. I have often seen the roughest *fellāḥ* handle his sick child with remarkable tenderness when he has brought it to me in the hope that I might be able to cure it of some complaint.

Muslim law permits a man to put away his wife if she has no children, and a woman divorced for this cause has small chance of obtaining another husband when once the reason for her divorce has become known. Hence the prospect of childlessness is a very real terror to a wife, and the methods to which women resort in order to prevent such a catastrophe are numerous.

Some years ago, when I was working at a large collection of charms and various magical appliances at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, it occurred to me that certain so-called pendants which my brother had brought me from Egypt might have some magical powers attached to them. These pendants are modern copies of ancient Egyptian blue glazed amulets, representing gods, goddesses, sacred animals, or scarabs. I showed these objects to an Egyptian sheikh then resident in Oxford, and asked him what they were used for. After some hesitation he told me that they were women's charms, and were used in Upper Egypt as a means of ensuring the birth of children. I have found that such charms are in great request in all the provinces south of Cairo that I have visited. The sheikh also told me that a man travelling about Upper Egypt with such charms in his possession would be besieged, as he approached a village, by crowds of women begging to be allowed to step over these amulets.

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to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

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ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor.

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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose lamentations are the loudest of all.

It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

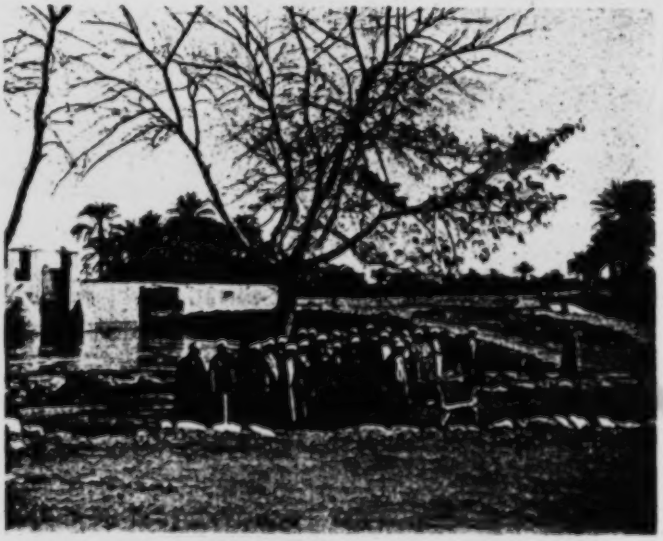

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached.

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion.

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow.

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them-

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Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their recitatons, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead. The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly alwaysmade in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people presen, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a shar in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions, the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

On pesenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will say, "*Khud kaḥk ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation. It is qute a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted with gref, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical.

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread-

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mourning, which could easily be distinguished by the number of men seated outside it; these observed almost complete silence, instead of carrying on an animated conversation as they would have done in happier circumstances.

I was courteously received by the men and conducted to the apartment in which the women were assembled. The house was one of the type always to be found in Egyptian villages, built of crude bricks, and with steep, rough steps inside the building leading up to the roof. In the first room which we entered lay the coffin—a long, narrow box, made of planks of wood hastily nailed together, over which was stretched a covering of black cloth decorated with white crosses and other designs in *appliqué*. We passed through this room into an inner apartment, in which a large number of women were sitting on the ground, uttering from time to time piercing cries of grief. The sister of the dead man came toward me, her hair and dress dishevelled. As she advanced she swayed from side to side in a kind of dance, keeping both arms extended. She at once conducted me into a small room which led out of that occupied by the women. It was dark except for a glimmer of light which penetrated through the half-open door. A mattress was on the floor—indeed, it occupied most of the available space—and on it was stretched the body of the dead man, covered with a coloured sheet. From the end of the room, which was in pitch darkness, came the piercing cries of wailing women. Presently the sister drew aside the coverlet and invited me to take a seat on the mattress beside the dead man. This was no doubt very polite of her, but it was rather more than I could stand—not that I feared the dead, but because the mattress was almost certain to be covered with vermin. I managed to evade the offer without hurting anyone's feelings, and returned to the larger concourse of women in the adjoining room. Each of these women had a coloured handkerchief—green, blue, or purple, or some of these colours combined—such as are carried by women at all funerary ceremonies. Some of them possessed two such handkerchiefs knotted together. They held them in front of them, stretched out at full length, and as they swayed from side to side, wailing and bemoaning the dead, they would wave the handkerchiefs up and down. The faces of the women, as well as their hands and arms, were smeared with blue dye.

Presently I went out to speak to the men, who evidently dis-

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approved of the way the women were conducting themselves. They asked me if such things were done in Oxford when there was a death. I said " No," and explained that at such times there was always perfect quiet in a well-conducted household.

" *Aḥsan, aḥsan khāliṣ* " (" Better, much better "), they replied.

Just then a number of women came running out of the house, followed by the dead man's sister. They rushed into a small palm-grove which faced the house and began a weird dance, the sister standing in their midst. The last-mentioned had, on leaving the house, made for a muck-heap which lay near the entrance, and, thrusting her hands into it, covered her face, arms, and clothes with mud, and finally clapped a large lump of it on to the top of her head. As the women went round and round in a circle they chanted a mournful song, violently smiting their cheeks with both hands, in rhythmic accompaniment to the singing.

They soon worked themselves up into a perfect frenzy ; the sister fell back two or three times, almost fainting, whereupon the men entreated me to induce her to return to the house. This I at last succeeded in doing, with the assistance of one of the male relations, who were apparently thoroughly ashamed of this wild exhibition of grief. When we had got her safely into the house she sat down on the ground with some of the other women, including the dead man's wife. The latter, by the way, took quite a secondary place in these ceremonies. The blood-tie is the strongest in Egypt, and the wife has to take second place to the sister on such occasions.

The sister now began a long oration in praise of her dead brother, in which the other women joined at intervals, in a kind of chorus. She kept on pointing wildly toward the door of the room in which the dead man lay, while she and her companions uttered cries of " *Yā akhūi, yā akhūi !* " (" O my brother, my brother ! ").

By this time two or three men were busy washing the corpse and preparing it for burial. Presently one of them came out to fetch the wrappings, which had been placed on the floor of an outer room. These wrappings consisted of white and green cotton cloths, as the relations of the dead man were too poor to afford silk, the white being wound round the body first, the green cloth providing the outer covering, as is also the case with Muslims. After a few minutes the door again opened and the men came out to get the coffin. As they were carrying it into the death-chamber the women became frantic (they had by this time been joined by

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the dancing women from outside), and the men had some difficulty in getting past them into the room again and closing the door. The sister got up and rushed toward the door leading into the room where her dead brother lay, crying out to him, "*Ta'āla, ta'āla!*" ("Come, come!"), the mourning women at the same time uttering their piercing cries of grief, so that the din was deafening. As the men came out with the coffin, which now contained the body, the pandemonium became greater than ever

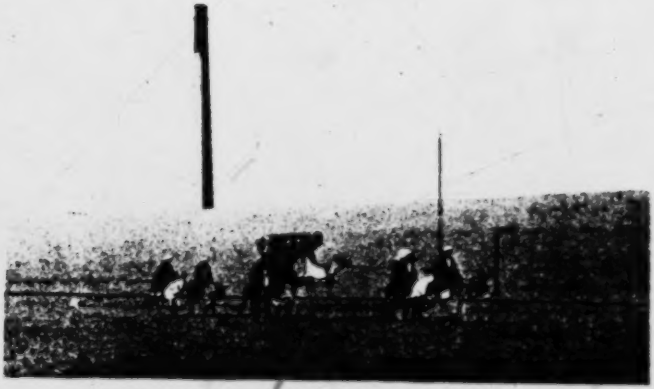

FIG. 55. COPTIC FUNERAL: COFFIN ON CAMEL'S BACK

The women shrieked, and the sister tore off her veil (at other times considered a most immodest thing to do), wrenched her dress open at the throat, and rent her garments to such a degree that her female companions, for decency's sake, were obliged to restrain her. The coffin was then placed on the ground, and the women seated themselves round it. They hammered with their fists on the lid, shrieking to the dead man, and flinging their arms wildly about in the air. The sister so completely lost her self-control that *I urged the men to advance and take up the coffin.* After some difficulty they managed to hoist it up on to their shoulders, and, followed by a crowd of screaming women, at last got out of the house. The coffin was placed on the back of a donkey, though a camel is more often used (see Fig. 55), and the procession set off for the Coptic monastery situated in the desert a few miles away.

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I mounted my donkey and accompanied them. The women went only a short way with us, and we left them, the hysterical sister in their midst, huddled together on the high road which led through the cultivation, still shrieking, smiting their faces, and waving their arms aloft. As we passed on toward the peaceful desert their cries grew fainter and fainter in the distance, till at last no sound broke the stillness save the occasional singing of a hymn by the men who formed the funeral *cortège*.

E 764 346 152 793

When we arrived at the gate of the monastery every one passed within the precincts, and the bearers carried the coffin into the church, setting it down in front of the curtain behind which was the altar. We all entered the sacred building, and a seat was offered to me close to the corpse. There was a large assembly of both Copts and Muslims, for the dead man was much respected by the followers of both religions among whom he had lived. We waited and waited, but still there was no sign of a priest. The men beguiled the time by talking and smoking, and, though I am sure it was not at all intentional, there was an extraordinary lack of reverent demeanour in those present. At last the priest arrived. The whole congregation immediately rose to their feet, and after the priest had shaken hands with me the others came forward in turns and kissed his hand. The lid of the coffin was now removed, and the body disclosed, wrapped in its white and green coverings. A very dirty cloth, on which was sewn a cross in green, was placed over the body, and candles were lighted and stuck to the sides of the coffin—six on each side and one each at the head and feet. This was accomplished by dropping some of the melting wax from the lighted candles on to the coffin and sticking the candles on to it. Two larger candles were fitted into large candlesticks placed on either side of the head of the coffin. These candlesticks were possibly of silver, but were in such a dirty state that it was impossible to guess with any certainty of what they were made.

E 764 794 788 533 [537]

The service then began. It was very long, lasting for three hours or more! The priest was accompanied by the *'arīf*, as the man who leads the singing in a Coptic church is called. The latter was quite blind, and had a very resonant voice. When he sang he accompanied himself on a pair of cymbals. There was a great deal of this 'music,' and also recitations by the priest of portions of the Gospels. Furthermore, another man, whom he singled out from among those present, likewise read passages from the

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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

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The priest, I was told, was to arrive at 3.30 P.M., so I started off for the house early in the afternoon. I found a number of women seated in an inner room, wailing and waving their coloured handkerchiefs with the usual rhythmic movements. The sister of the dead man began a long dissertation in his praise, speaking of all his good qualities and good deeds. She would speak for a short time, then pause, whereupon the wailing women would join in a rhythmic chorus of cries, occasionally uttering the customary piercing cries of grief. The sister would again take up her theme, followed shortly by the wailing women as before.

FIG. 56. COPTIC PRIEST HOLDING CROSS

E [276]
E [293] [291] [778]
E 765 788 783

Meanwhile, one of the men seated outside the house came in and handed round cigarettes. Several of the women smoked, but this form of enjoyment did not in the least interfere with, or interrupt, the wailing and screaming. Still the priest did not come, though all the arrangements for his visit had been made—a large metal basin of water being placed on a chair, with a glass decanter of water standing in it. At last, after four o'clock, he arrived with his *'arīf*, both of them having come from the monastery in the desert a few miles off. The priest read some prayers, after which the *'arīf* chanted certain passages, and then portions from the Bible were read aloud by one of the men present. Immediately upon his arrival the priest had placed a small silver cross (see Fig. 56) in the basin of water, and it remained there all the time the reading and chanting were in progress. When these were ended he removed the cross, which was, of course, dripping with water, turned to me, and pressed it on my forehead, making the sign of the cross on me at the same time. He repeated this ceremony with each of the men in turn, and then, turning toward the crowd of women, sprinkled them with some of the water from the basin. Incense had been kept burning from the moment of the priest's arrival, and he now took up the censer and advanced with it toward the room

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The two ropes attached to the boat by the divers were very long, as well as strong, and one was held by either group of helpers (Fig. 59). First one rope was pulled by the men on one bank, then, after a few turns, the other was tugged from the other side of the canal. This went on regularly for some time, the whole proceeding being well organized by the officer in charge of the district. However, as it turned out, the two groups of people facing one another across the canal belonged to two antagonistic villages, and, before long, stones of considerable size began to fly from one bank to another. The officer, an old friend of mine, rushed up and begged me to take shelter while he settled the matter, but I was far too interested to beat a retreat, as I wanted to see what would happen. He, armed with a stout *kurbāg* (a very powerful leather whip), rushed in among the crowd that had actually started the fray, slashing right and left. By this display of promptitude and courage he put an end to what might have been a serious and bloody fight. Meanwhile, I dodged about trying to get a snapshot of the combat, but the excited crowds, rushing hither and thither, frustrated all my endeavours. Eventually the villagers who started the fight were no longer allowed to assist, and were made to squat in rows at a distance, in dire disgrace They appeared utterly unmoved, and when I spoke to them and

FIG. 57. WEAPONS USED IN BLOOD-FEUDS AND INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

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INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

asked them why they had behaved so badly I was met by the friendliest grins.

On another occasion I happened to be present at a fight which took place at the annual festival held in honour of a local sheikh. One of the villages mentioned above again engaged in battle with the people in whose village the festival was taking place. The chief guard of that village, a hospitable man as well as an excellent disciplinarian, invited me to visit his house after I had seen the various shows which are an important feature of such festivities.

FIG. 58. ATTITUDE OF COMBATANTS IN INTER-VILLAGE FIGHTS

His house had a good balcony overlooking the whole fair, and, as the weather was very hot, I was only too glad to be able to watch what was going on from so sheltered and comfortable a position. Suddenly, without apparent warning, out came the *nabābīt* (plural of *nabbūt*), and the fun began. The head guard, however, is skilful in using the *kurbāg*, and he was soon in the thick of it, slashing right and left, accompanied by a soldier, similarly armed, who had been sent as my bodyguard. Presently the combatants fled helter-skelter down side-passages—anywhere, in fact, to get out of reach of the well-directed lashes of the whips! Peace again reigned, but not for long. A crowd composed of members of the two antagonistic villages again collected, and sticks once more had free play. This fight was stopped in the same manner as the previous one, but there were two or three repetitions before a final armistice was enforced.

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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

If the land to be irrigated is much above water-level two or three of these *shawādīf* (plural of *shādūf*) are worked one above the other.

The men thus engaged usually sing at their task, some of their songs being very melancholy, and descriptive of their hard and laborious toil. One of them runs thus:

Shawādīf,
Their ropes are of palm-fibre
And their pails are of goatskins.
And it was in ancient times that *shawādīf* were invented
By the blessed Ṣāliḥ Zabādi.

The ropes referred to are those by which the bucket is suspended from the end of the weighted branch which acts as a lever. The name of the supposed inventor is, of course, mythological.

The following is a lament on the hard labour involved in the working of a *shādūf*:

Hast Thou resolved upon strangling me, O God?
Loosen the noose!
No mother weeps [for me],
No aunt,
No sister![1]

Another method of raising the water is by means of a water-wheel round the circumference of which pottery jars are attached. Another small wheel with cogs is attached to the same axis as the larger wheel, and into it fit the cogs of a large horizontal wheel. When this is made to revolve the two vertical wheels are set in motion. A long pole is attached to the horizontal wheel, and to it an ox, cow, or buffalo, or even a camel, is yoked and driven round and round by a man or boy. The animal is usually blind-folded to prevent it from becoming giddy. The groaning and creaking of the turning water-wheel form, to my mind, a most soothing sound.[2] Yet another contrivance for raising the water to the level of the fields is the Archimedean screw, depicted in Fig. 98.

During harvest-time every available man, woman, and child is employed in the fields; but before any of the corn is cut some of the villagers go into the fields and pluck the finest ears by hand. These are plaited into a special form, and this object, called the

[1] See H. Schaefer, *The Songs of an Egyptian Peasant*, translated by F. H. Breasted (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 43 f.
[2] For excellent photographs of a *shādūf* and a water-wheel see *op. cit.*, pp. 45 and 107.

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to the direction in which it turned, either to the right or left, the man whose name was inscribed on the piece of paper selected was guilty or not guilty. Several of these strips of paper were tested, and two or three people whose names were written thereon were detected as the thieves. The man whose things had been stolen told me that he had all along suspected these people, but, as

FIG. 118. DIVINATION CEREMONY WITH THE ḲORĀN TO DETECT A THIEF

they were related to his family, he did not like to prosecute them. They were the poorer members of the family, and were consequently very jealous of their richer relative. The magician employed on this occasion is renowned for his cleverness in such methods of divination, and no one would dream of doubting his decisions.

There is a form of black magic still practised in Egypt by means of human figures made of wax or clay. If a man desires to take his revenge on another who, he considers, has done him a grievous wrong he visits a magician and gets him to make a wax or clay

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figure (Fig. 119), supposed to represent the man he wishes to injure. If wax is used the figure is sometimes thrown into a fire, incantations being uttered by the magician at the same time. If clay is used the figure may be placed in water. As these figures disappear in the fire or water the man who is to be affected gradually dies. Such an extreme measure is very rarely resorted to—indeed, it would be exceedingly difficult to find a magician who would consent to carry it out, even with the promise of a large sum of money. There is supposed to be no cure for the man against whom such magic is worked; he is bound to die, as the figures cannot be rescued from the fire or the water.

FIG. 119. WAX FIGURES USED IN BLACK MAGIC

Such wax or clay figures are more commonly used to bring about rather less direful results in the people whom they are supposed to represent. Needles or pins are stuck into them, or, if these are not available, the sharp points of palm-leaves may be used instead. Wherever the pin or other sharp point is inserted into the figure the person who is represented will feel pain in the corresponding part of his body, until the pin is removed from the clay or wax figure. This pricking of the figure should always be done by the magician himself, who accompanies such actions with the recitation of magic spells. If the man who is being thus injured guesses what is causing him pain he will go to the magician and induce him by larger payments of money to remove the pin from the figure. The moment this is done the pain felt by the man ceases.

Similar practices have been resorted to up to quite recent times in more than one part of the British Isles, and are still current in many parts of the world, as the collection of such objects in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford well demonstrates.

I have already at the beginning of this chapter stated that some people are believed to be possessed by sheikhs, these sheikhs being among the many subterranean peoples whose existence is firmly believed in by the peasants. Such sheikhs may be good or bad; if the former they will assist the person they possess, if the latter they will require to be constantly appeased.

Possession may come suddenly, no one knows how. It is also

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787 786 152 believed that if a woman gets a sudden fright she is particularly liable to become possessed. For instance, I was told that a woman coming after dark down the stairs which lead from the roof of a house to the ground floor, and carrying no light with her, may become frightened and fall, in which case a sheikh will come into her at once. She will realize what has happened and will ask the sheikh to tell her his name, whereupon he is believed to reply, "I am Sheikh so and so."

A man or woman may be possessed by several sheikhs of both sexes, and persons once possessed remain so till they die. As I have already explained above, a man or woman who is troubled by the sheikh who possesses them will consult a magician, who will inform them what the sheikh requires.

755 787 Sometimes it is necessary to have a ceremony called a *zār*—in fact, most people who are troubled with a sheikh either have such a performance at home or attend one which is being held in another person's house. When a *zār* is being held all the villagers know about it, for they hear the sound of the drum and smell the incense, and all those who are afflicted with this kind of possession will be attracted thither. The sheikhs "make them go," so I was told. Certain songs are sung by the conductor of a *zār* and his [533] assistants. The meaning of the songs has, in some instances, been lost, and some of them may please one sheikh, but not another. Therefore, if a man is possessed by several sheikhs each in turn has to have the songs sung that please him.

One woman I know, after becoming possessed in this way, lost the use of both her legs, which swelled to an unusual size, and if she was moved she cried out with pain. Her brother, seeing her plight, arranged for her to have a *zār*, bringing the conductor and his assistants to his house with their musical instruments—a drum and tambourines. The performance, which was held in an inner room, having begun, the patient suddenly got up and began to dance, and the sheikh spoke through her.

Her brother and the people assembled there asked him what he wanted, to which he replied, "I want nothing."

"Why should you then make her unhappy?" the brother and his friends inquired, "and where do you come from? Are you an Egyptian or a Sudanese?"

He replied, "She was always sitting about and unhappy because her children died, and so I came into her."

So they again asked, "What do you want?"

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scripts, one of which he designates the "Book of Adam." He has with great labour collected and written out magical cures and protections for those troubled by *'afārīt*, and these form the contents of one of the books. He learnt his art, so he told me, from another magician, who was not a member of his family, but under whom he served a long apprenticeship.

During my sojourn in Egypt I have been given many accounts of the wonderful cures wrought by magicians on people possessed by *'afārīt*. I wrote the details down when they were given to me, and some of them may be interesting to my readers. The names of the people concerned, and the villages in which they live, are suppressed, in deference to their feelings; indeed, it would be a breach of confidence to divulge them. Such happenings are not usually discussed with foreigners, and were related to me only because I am regarded by the villagers as a trustworthy friend.

A young man in Upper Egypt became very angry with his wife one night while she was sitting in front of the fire cooking the evening meal. In his anger he took a pottery water-bottle (a *kulleh*) and struck her with it. In doing this he broke the bottle, and the water and some of the pieces of pottery fell into the fire, extinguishing it. The next moment he heard a voice saying to him, "You have broken the head of one of my children, so I will come into you [*i.e.*, possess you]." The man thereupon became mad, and began to tear his own face, and strike all those who came near him. Some of his relatives, seeing his terrible condition, proceeded to bind his hands behind his back and tie his feet together at the ankles, to prevent him doing further harm to himself or anyone else; but he continued to cry out and to speak meaningless words. His relatives took him to one doctor after another, but they could do him no good, and he continued in the same condition of violent madness.

At last, when he had remained in this state for three months, they went to see a certain sheikh. This man is a magician, and of a charitable character, and they begged him to cure the unfortunate man, pleading at the same time his poverty. The sheikh, who possesses (for he is still alive) many books of incantations and charms such as those mentioned above, listened sympathetically to their pleading, and consented to visit the sufferer, but he told them that they must first bring him a small piece of one of the garments belonging to the madman. They went home and

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asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*."

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible.

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived.

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him.

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman.

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

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colours, and wearing tall, peaked hats. Two of them held him by the feet, and two held his head. He immediately crossed himself, and said, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." At the mention of these sacred names the *'afārīt* dropped him on the floor and disappeared.

FIG. 136. A COPTIC CHOIR-BOY

I was told that the Sheikh B's anger was aroused because the man, by his recitation of the Psalms, had stopped his communications with the *'afārīt*; and so, in order to punish him, he sent the four *'afārīt* to frighten him. Since that date the Sheikh B has refused to enter that house.

The following story tells how a naughty boy was punished by an *'afrīt*. It should be explained here that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of *Kiyahk*, which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory special prayers and passages from the Bible in Coptic. Thus engaged they remain in the church till daybreak, when the priest comes for the service. Coptic boys acquire a smattering of the ancient language when at the school of the *'arīf*, the title of the officiant who leads the singing in the church.

On one such occasion the boy just alluded to was in the church with a number of his companions, taking part in the recitations. He left the church for a few minutes, and on his way back saw a very fine donkey standing in the open space in front of the church. The sight of this donkey proving to be irresistible to him, he immediately mounted it, and, digging his heels into its sides, urged it to go faster and faster round and round the open space. Suddenly the donkey began to grow taller and taller, till it reached the height of about five metres It then suddenly vanished, and the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Before people take up residence in a newly built house, or complete a well for a water-wheel, or use new machinery for irrigation or grinding corn, an ox or a sheep, or, if the people are poor, a fowl, must be killed on the threshold of the house, or close to the engine, or inside the well before the water-level is reached. This is done in case these spots may be haunted by *'afārīt*, who will trouble the owners if not first appeased by the blood of a sacrifice.

Within a year three people were killed by the irrigation machinery

FIG. 137. THE MOTHER OF THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED WAILING OUTSIDE THE 'OMDEH'S ENGINE-HOUSE

belonging to the *'omdeh* of the village mentioned on p. 235 (see also Fig. 137). One, a woman, was killed not long before I arrived there, a boy was caught in the machinery and killed during my visit, and a man was killed in a similar way just after I had left. This *'omdeh* had made no sacrifice before using the engine, so a number of the villagers went to him and demanded that he should kill an ox on the spot. This he did, about a month after I had gone, and some of the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the engine. Apparently this has appeased the *'afārīt*, for I have heard of no accidents since the sacrifice was made!

There is an old Copt in that village, considerably over ninety

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

964 The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

992 158 The sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [964] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

992 766 778 [969] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 788 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh 'Abdu l-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [584] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 251 ff.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

792 During the sheikh ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf's lifetime he was visited on one occasion by the sheikh Sulimān, who resided in a village some miles distant. Wherever he went the sheikh Sulimān was always accompanied by his faithful servant. On the occasion of this visit [198] the two sheikhs conversed together in an unknown language. [150] This roused the curiosity of the sheikh Sulimān's servant, who after the interview asked his master what they had been talking about. The sheikh told him that ʿAbdu l-Laṭīf had remonstrated with him for coming to his village and had bade him remain in his own neighbourhood. Doubtless jealousy was at the root of this ill-feeling.

792 A few days later the servant noticed very early in the morning 788 that his master's fingers were all burned at the tips. He immediately questioned him as to the cause of this injury, and the sheikh told him that it was his custom to go every night to all the sheikhs' tombs in the neighbourhood and light candles for them, and that while he was engaged in this pious work his fingers were burned.

798 The sheikh Sulimān is now dead, but his piety is still remembered. 792 He is buried in his native village, but six other tombs are erected 769 to his memory in various parts of the country. Moreover, the inhabitants of his village hold a *mūlid* every year in his honour.

In one of the provinces in Upper Egypt, close to the desert hills, 792 lived the sheikheh Ṣulūḥ. This woman had, during her lifetime, a great reputation for holiness, and people flocked to her, in times of difficulty, from all quarters. Her skin was very dark from constant exposure to the sun, and her head, on which she wore no veil, was covered with a crop of hair, thick and long like the wool of a sheep; from beneath her brows peered dark, sharp-looking eyes. Her clothes were scanty, consisting merely of a piece of linen rag and a sort of coat. She remained out in this desert solitude all day, and at night, so I was told, slept alone "in the mountain." As I have explained, the people call the often precipitous high-desert hills the mountain (*el-gebel*), so she probably [133] took shelter in one of the natural or artificial caves which exist in great numbers in the hillsides.

On one occasion, when a number of men and women had come 792 to consult her, one of the former asked her what had become of 789 his most valuable camel, which he had lost. The sheikheh at once 685 told him the exact hour in which this loss had occurred, and in-

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old.

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombe chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin?

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god,

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strasburg, 1925), p. 165.
[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
F
A
964
152
A
212
532
A
113

THE FELLĀḤÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

The utterly uncontrolled grief displayed by the women when a death occurs (pp. 111 f., 122 ff.) is still admirably illustrated by a relief in an Old Kingdom tomb-chapel at Sakḳāreh.[1] The widow is depicted as having collapsed in a faint on hearing of her husband's sudden death, and then, after having been restored to consciousness and dragged to her feet, as tottering along supported by two friends. The various attitudes of grief of the women surrounding the widow are characteristic of modern female mourners. It is interesting to observe, too, that one of the attendants holds the widow's necklace, which has been taken off on receipt of the news of her husband's death (*cf.* p. 50). Further proof that the modern Egpytian peasant women display their grief before and at a funeral by exactly the same gestures and conduct as did their ancestors—by dishevelling the hair, tearing the clothes, exposing the breasts, gathering up mud and with it plastering the head, breasts, and arms, and by wildly waving the arms and beating the head and breasts—is to be found in numbers of ancient paintings and reliefs.[2] An admirable example is the photograph

FIG. 162. WAILING WOMEN
After W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pl. 9.

[1] J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux*, Pls. LXXXI f.

[2] See W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, Fig. 5 on p. 33; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 120, 166, 167, 209, 210; Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes* (New York, 1925), Pls. XIX ff. (Pl. XXI shows a woman placing mud or dust on her head); Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhêt* (London, 1915), Pl. XXIV; G. Roeder, *Die Denkmäler des Pelizaeus Museums zu Hildesheim* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 111 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 764 152

(Fig. 162) of a painting in the tomb-chapel of Re'mōse at Thebes.

The attitude of the wailing mother in Fig. 50, p. 110, and Fig. 137, p. 236, finds an exact parallel in the wailing women depicted in a painting in the tomb-chapel of Amenemḥēt at Thebes.[1]

A [535] [532]
F A [822]

FIG. 163. FUNERARY DANCE PERFORMED BY FEMALE MOURNERS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 419.

The modern custom of smearing the hands, arms, and face with blue dye (pp. 111, 122, 264) may also be ancient, in view of blue having been the ancient mourning colour (p. 286); but, so far as my brother is aware, the ancient artists have not shown this in the pictures of wailing women.

The perambulation of the town or village by the female relatives and friends immediately after a death has taken place (p. 109) is described by Herodotus[2] in the following words:

> When a member of any distinction dies in an household, all the female members of that family besmear their heads and faces with mud, and then, leaving the corpse in the house, they parade the town, and smite themselves, having their garments girt up and their breasts exposed; and all their female kin accompany them.

The pre- and post-burial dance performed by the mourning women, described on pp. 114, 123, 263, finds close parallel in a relief from a New Kingdom tomb-chapel at Sakḳāreh, now in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 163). As in the funerary dance described on p. 114, the women are dancing to the beating of single-membrane

A 764 765 535

[1] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *ibid.*, bottom register, left.
[2] ii, 85.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *felläḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.
[2] ii, 90. [3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.
[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.
[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.
[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.
[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.
[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Duemichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.
[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding. 181 619

During the first Great War the English recruited a native contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt. 702 464 619

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is enlisted for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service. 702 [164]

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving home to join the army, the family receives condolences and abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoosa* and all" (Guindi). [152]

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time. 702 426

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it 702

702 proves the capacities of the fellah. Here again the question of education comes in.

Nowadays the resistance to enlistment should be growing less. The men are better treated. When they leave the [554] army, in decent clothes, after five years of service under military discipline, they have lost their uncouthness and become *effendis*, gentlemen.

152 When a fellah is in barracks, or when he has taken 186 up work in a town so as to make a little money, he never forgets his native village, and homesickness shows on his stolid face. He tries at least to keep up contact with home and to retain some of its habits. Many a time the author [702 has written letters at the dictation of these illiterate peasants, 123] who hate being uprooted. It is always the same story: "Tell me how the crops are getting on. Give my best wishes to So-and-so, and to So-and-so".

621 If the vital interests of a village are in immediate 186 danger, each villager feels a strong sense of unity with the group; men, women, and children unite in a single force. Witness the dramatic affair of Abu Shâdy in 1936. As part of a scheme to reorganise the drainage the Irrigation 579 Department had decided to cut off a canal that had watered 186 the whole district for thirty years. The entire population rose against the labourers, against the police, even against the military, to prevent the diversion of the water. They held out against all these forces for several days. The women stood in the front line to urge on the men, the children provided a supply of missiles, and a regular strategy was improvised.

621 When a moneylender, a landowner, or a *nâzer* has carried 682 his exactions too far, and is killed with public approval, the 609 finest sleuth cannot discover the murderer, so close is the 579 conspiracy of silence. Should one village, or even a few people belonging to it, insult or injure the next, the inhabitants of the latter show a united front and avenge the insult with stones, clubs or guns (for many fellaheen possess these forbidden arms. Thanks, however, to the intervention of the police, these village wars are becoming less common, though private feuds are still as frequent, as fierce, and as sudden as ever (**).

476 Here is one of the contradictions of fellah life. In the 577 village everybody knows everybody else, and no-one would

ever be allowed to die of hunger. The mutual help of the men in field-work and of the women in housework, the more readily given as poverty is greater, deserves every commendation. The way in which the fellaheen will work to accomplish something in the common interest, when they are not under orders, shows what they are capable of. Yet when land, a woman, or an *'omda* is in question, rival parties are established and the feud is kept up in every family from generation to generation. Everyone in the village has to take sides. Neutrals are despised. The antagonism, though usually latent, will show itself suddenly over some trivial matter, such as the shifting of a boundary mark, a theft of manure, or a *gamoosa* trespassing. Then human life counts for nothing, and death takes a holiday, especially in villages where there is Arab blood in the fellah's veins.

Thus life is lived in constant insecurity. To feel this, one must spend a night in a village. As soon as night falls precautions are taken against a possible foe. The cattle, including the camel if there is one, are brought indoors and shut in the house. The family also take refuge together behind the great closed door. The head of the house often stays outside watching his field or his water, for the enemy is always on the prowl. As the shadows deepen, the dogs begin to bark and gunshots become frequent.

The shots come not only from the unsleeping watchman, trying to reassure himself and everyone else, but also from fellaheen armed going in defiance of the law. During harvest the fellaheen become even more suspicious, and may be seen with a rifle slung over their shoulders as they stand with their feet in water to gather the last tufts of cotton.

In May 1936 the village of Qalandol was divided into two camps over the selection of an *'omda* — the friends of Mahmud Bakr on the one side, and those of Aly Abbas on the other. Mahmud Bakr made some slanderous remarks about his opponent, and one morning his son was found dead in the fields. A few days later the sister of Aly Abbas was stabbed as a reprisal. After that, for a whole year, both sides watched and waited. Neither work nor journeys were undertaken alone, but always in groups. One market day, when crowds of fellaheen had come from villages near, a young man of the party of Mahmud Bakr was insulted by an opponent, whom he struck. At once the supporters of Aly Abbas

father or grandmother (who wields great authority), a married son, and some cousin or other on a prolonged visit. 592

When a fellah wishes to get married, if he is of age he deals directly with the girl's father and pays him the price. If he is young, that is less than eighteen, his mother will try to find him the ideal bride among her relations or neighbours, almost always in the same district. The girl will be fourteen or fifteen years of age, and by no means ignorant of the facts of life. The law of 1923, however, has fixed sixteen as the age of marriage (**). 584 [831] 582

The betrothal is celebrated by proxy in a contract of marriage (*'aqd*). The dowry (*mahr*) which the man must offer varies between L.E. 5 and L.E. 10. He pays two thirds down, and binds himself to pay the rest by a document drawn up by the *maazûn* or the *'omda*. 583 584

With this money the girl's parents go to the market-town to buy her trousseau, consisting of a red wedding-dress and gold bracelets (costing L.E. 1 or L.E. 2), and for furniture a water-jug, two copper cooking-pots (*halla*), a tub (*tisht*), a round table (*tablia*), and a brightly coloured chest cased in zinc. If the *mahr*, is large enough, they will also buy a mattress stuffed with cotton or straw, one or two pillows, and a quilted coverlet (*lihâf*).

On the wedding-day, that is to say the day the bride leaves her father's house to go to her husband's, all these things are loaded on to a camel hired for the occasion, and paraded round the village. The young girls go before and after, singing and clapping their hands, and the villagers admire the treasures as they pass. This takes place in the afternoon, and is followed by the departure of the bride. A crowd of women and children press into the room to see how she looks in her finery. The older women have bathed her the evening before, and her hands and feet have been reddened with henna. Her marriageable friends, in order to share her luck, have pinched her thighs. The procession can now begin. 585 [302 789]

The bride is hidden by red or white veils, and rides on a camel or in an old motorcar. Two or three women relatives go with her under the canopy. The men fire shots into the air (an Arab custom), while shrill tremolo cries (*zaghârît*) alternate with songs from the women. [152]

Because the fellah lives entirely in the present, he is neither hurried, nor curious, nor ambitious. He is m[illegible] and peaceable because he is patient, and patient because he is subject to men and events, and for these very reasons he is, like the Nile, indifferent rather than idle. He feels no need for constant activity. His mind is passive and fatalistic; he takes things as they come. 181 183

At times, however, some fact breaks suddenly through the confused atmosphere of his mind, through this mist that protects him from excess of knowledge or action — as from suicide — and goads him into activity. Then he reacts on the impulse of the moment, without discrimination or sense of proportion, without reckoning the importance of what has happened or thinking of the consequences of what he is doing. His neighbour pinches some of his harvest, a duck, or a fowl. Someone diverts his irrigation water or lets a *gamoossa* loose on his grazing. His son is bullied by another boy or his wife insulted by some other woman. A friend delays too long in returning a few borrowed piastres, or looks too long at his wife. Someone brings a complaint or accusation against him. Then the same fellah who is so patient under the injustice or cruelty of his superiors shows himself to his equals as touchy as can be. The occurrence may be of little or no importance, but it seems to him intolerable and stings him to revenge. He reacts violently, and infects others with the same passion as himself. Human life counts for nothing. 181 152 577 578 [685] [683 426]

In Upper Egypt, when a man quarrels with another he will try to attack him on the spot with any weapon he can lay his hands on. The fellah of the Sa'id is like a volcano which will erupt when least expected. 579 181 578

More usually the revenge is cunningly dissembled, and carried out by night with endless precautions. The enemy will be set upon from behind, in the maize fields; or if the man himself is not attacked his crop will be burnt, his *gamoossa* poisoned, or his corn scattered over the neighbouring fields.

Though the fellah will put up with a multitude of wrongs from his masters when at work, he is not afraid to stand up to them if the dispute is about women, for women and land are the points on which he is most susceptible. Then there 181 183 578 562

181 is no question of strong and weak, rich and poor. Authority
183 and wealth count for nothing. Landowners know this,
578 and cannot take their pleasure of the village women.
562 More than one Bey has been murdered at his own door for seducing a village girl.

682 Murder and revenge among the fellaheen arise more
181 often from quick temper than from ill will ; they are signs
●152 of hot blood. But such outbursts do not last long, and resignation, being more habitual, is a far more noticeable characteristic.

[539] The following fellah proverbs are significant :
Patience moves mountains.
Patience costs nothing.
The patient man sees free.

'When God created all things', says Ka'b el Ahbar,
773 according to Maqrizi, 'He gave each of them a companion. "I am going to Syria", said Reason. "I will come with you", said Rebellion. Poverty said "I am going to the Desert". "I'll come with you", said Health. "I am going to Egypt", said Plenty. "And I'll go at your side", said Resignation.'

181 Resignation is a word scarcely strong enough to describe
163 the servility and degradation which is imposed upon the fellaheen not so much by their poverty as by the unceasing pressure of their masters. The fellah acts like a child or a brute because he is treated like one. He knows nothing of the upper class which rules him except its hard exterior. It is often said that the fellaheen cannot understand an authority that is humane and appeals to their better instincts. This is true, but the reason is that they have been brought
[681] up to nothing but blows, fines, insults, and bullying, which have finally rendered them insensible.

I myself, before I understood the meaning of human dignity, used the same harshness towards them, so natural and inevitable did it seem.

That the fellah's sense of justice is corrupt, that he lacks frankness, confidence, and eagerness is true, but this is because no-one has done anything to teach him these qualities or to give him any moral encouragement.

It is also true that his work is done without pleasure, without devotion and without style, that he has no taste for doing a job well, that he lacks initiative and inventive-

expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *ndzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamooseh*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

When a fellah gets into debt, the *ndzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *ndzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *ndzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *ndzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Copts MR10

APPENDIX A

A NOTE ON MOURNING CUSTOMS

Both Christians and Moslems, at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, or the Little and Great Bairam (*), have a custom of going to pray at the tombs of their dead. On these days the cemetery takes on the appearance of a market, in which people of all conditions meet together. Families are continuously arriving. The camel is used to transport the provisions, bedding, boxes and kitchen-ware. Sometimes the Nile has to be crossed. The people crowd pell-mell into ferry boats, weighing them down till they are almost awash. The children, with their best clothes on, are delighted with the journey, but the women are weeping. When they visit the cemetery for the first time after a burial they cry out in grief, calling on the dead. Some of them stain their faces with blue and wave their handkerchiefs. I have seen old women scarcely able to walk and broken down by age and sickness, dragging themselves on this funeral pilgrimage, which they feel obliged to make, and from which they may never return.

Then the blood of sacrifice flows over the tomb, and the meat is given to the poor. Such libations and charitable offerings are supposed to comfort the souls of the dead. The goats and sheep, feeling their end approaching, cry aloud in despair. Yet in the dazzling sunshine, the clouds of dust, the tumult of the crowd, there is something of the holiday spirit. Hawkers temptingly display their wares, little cafés are opened, swings draw the children away. The families separate, each to visit its own. The upper part of the tomb is often built into a dome or living-space. Here the family will settle itself, to weep for hour after hour, or to sleep. Happy are the dead who are remembered, and happier still those for whom prayers are said.

When someone dies in the village, there is always a *mandara* (sitting-room) or a tent where the people go to offer

COMMENTARY

The mourner speaks in the person first of the dead man's friend, then of his mother, and finally also of the dead man himself, without any clear transition. Only the dead youth's words are put between quotation marks. F 764

4. The dead youth was his mother's only surviving son. To give her some consolation the mourner expresses a wish, which cannot be realised, to see children on sale in the market. Adoption is in Egypt an institution copied from abroad. In Upper Egypt it is still unknown even among Christians. Moslem law forbids it. C F [567]

5. To the mother the boy's writing-materials are precious reminders of his youthful promise.

6. Here the mourner describes the mother's dismay at the news of her son's death. The shock is so great that she can no longer put her clothes on straight. C F [152]

7. By Upper Egyptian women Sundays and festivals are observed as days for commemoration of the dead. To show their grief they keep away from church, even for years at a time. At Christmas and Easter the churches are deserted. On the other hand a crowd of women come to disturb the quiet of the cemetery with their tears and shrieks. This Pagan custom is to some extent Christianised by the distribution of gifts to the poor (meat, cakes, etc.) for the repose of the souls of the dead. C F 734 765 769 735

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

or from inflammation in the nerves. For that reason there are few who do not complain of it every day. As the numbers of the afflicted increase so, proportionately, do the methods of the quacks in claiming to "cure" it. One way, which I know by personal experience, is the "beating" of the temple-vein. They mean by this the "cutting" of the temple-vein [with a razor][1] because this is the place where one feels the pain more than any other. The fame of a barber in the villages depends on his skill in the "cutting" of the vein. A man, called Shurbagī, on the estate of Yūsuf Pāshā Kemāl in the district of Shubrakhīt has a monopoly of the "beating of the vein." For that reason the unfortunate from all villages make for him, pouring in to him from every quarter. He has fixed his fee for "beating the vein" at one dollar for each poor person whom this ailment has driven to him; while the rich pay according to their appearance and as they wish (for there is no way of stopping the generous). The belief in the efficacy of this "cure" for *Ṣudā'* by "cutting the temple vein" is widespread in a like degree in the small villages and large towns of Egypt. I have seen in the year [p. 62] just passed, in the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī Hospital, more than six persons *in extremis* through loss of blood due to an "operation" of this kind, not to mention those who will have died before they could be brought in, or who fainted through heart weakness.

When the whole corporation of barbers was hostilely attacking the temple-vein, it said to them what has been said very appropriately:

"Someone else did wrong and I am tormented for your sake,
Just as if I were the forefinger of the penitent."[2]

Those who are accustomed to have recourse to cutting the vein as a "cure" for *Ṣudā'* will find in fact a temporary relief after this "operation," resulting from the dulling of sensation due to the loss of a large amount of blood by effusion; but when the blood supply returns and the patient recovers his wonted health he suffers violent pains and cruel aches once more.

[1] [For an actual photographic illustration of this "operation" see Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 214. Tr.]

[2] [When a man is sorry for some action he may bite his finger in remorse. The finger is bitten though it was not to blame. Similarly with the temple-vein. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

But these influences are the result of fear and perhaps they
cause other diseases of a nervous character which are feared especially by the young. And since that is only the result of frightening children with the dark, and with Jinn and the bogey man[1] and other [p. 83] absurdities such as ignorant mothers tell to their children, frightening and terrifying them, the cure for the resultant ills is to eradicate the ignorance of the mothers by education, a thing which is still considered a sin in the East.

XL

INCENSING (TABKHĪRA)

" And for Syphilis (*ta<u>kh</u>rīsh*) they ' prescribed ' incensing,
Which an " old wife " among them of the tribe of Basūs prepares.
She recites over it the [Koranic] section of *Iblīs* [= the Devil]
As if Death sent her to go to and fro.
How much money was given for its fabrication ?
How many souls have been disgusted by its fumigation ?
And does their ' incensing ' with vermilion (*zungafr*)
Cure a sick person, when there is decay in the skeleton ? "

Some of the " old wives " in the provinces were famed in past ages for their " cure " of venereal disease by " incensing." It is an ancient practice in the villages until to-day it has attained to such a degree of imagination that the villagers apply the censer (*mab<u>kh</u>ara*) to every serious disease, be it V.D. or not.

I witnessed that myself once. An " old wife " came to " incense " a man who had been sick for a long time, and his relatives were bewildered about his disease (because they would not go to a physician) and in fact, he was suffering from retention of urine due to stone. The patient died with the assistance of the " incensing " of the " doctress."

[1] [Literally, the man with (or the father of) the skinned leg (*Abū rigl mas-lakh-a*). This bogey corresponds to our Devil on Two Sticks (= Diable Boiteu = Asmodeus, Prince of Demons). See my article in *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxviii, 4 (Dec., 1927), p. 377. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

Only, if the disease be concealed some days of the year, as happens in the winter season usually, the " physician " goes off boasting of his cure, charging the patients to take care still more, imposing upon them many hard conditions, so that he has a thousand excuses when the disease reappears.

XLIX

ENVY (ḤASAD)

" When the envier casts his evil eye,
Bring fire and *ṣabb*, together with *fāsūḫ* and *jāwī*,[1]
And if the Beldame of the tribe is present,
She will say: ' Incensing is most beneficial in curing.' "

Doctors have tried to account for envy, and their latest explanation is that it is due to the electric magnetism which exists in varying quantity in all things. In inorganic bodies it is the gravitational force, in plants it is the life principle. In human beings this electricity is found in a power which differs in quantity and quality. The former is known; the latter, on the other hand, is of two kinds, either beneficial or pernicious.

When the former kind is found in a person it makes him well disposed in wordly affairs. You see him attracting favours, either by his appearance or by the elegance of his address, or the beauty of his manners in society. On account of this, love of appearance is engendered, or enthusiasm for the discourse of a speaker, and there is destined for its owner the approval of men according to his business, or trade, or manner of life. But when the latter kind is found in a person it makes him become artful in subjects of evil report. You see him either a thief or a practicer of the lowest crafts, or addicted to covetousness and vengeance, if it is in his power to do so. And by means of whatever amount of this evil

[1] [These substances are explained *infra*. Tr.]

4. Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Fakih*[1] of their village was " envying " children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, " Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī ! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now ! " So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, " Oh, you fat camel ! " [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*hasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afârît*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarîn*. "Oh," replied the *'afârît*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarînek* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afârît* spoke through her.

As I have stated above, the *afârît*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *felláḥîn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy."

A woman's *ḳarînek* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarîn* or *ḳarînek* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarînek*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarînek*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarînek* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarînek*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarînek* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheîkh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigâb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarînehs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarînek* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigâb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant,

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

79.

A Cool Reception.

539x
832

Ya ḥali 'al-bedawiye.
u-la'etni fid-darb ed-ḍaiya'.
wel-ḥatim fi-ṣbaḥha yezaiya'.
Ḥallet el-'azib mitnaiya'.
Min ginno ḥarra' ef-fa'iye.

O, in what a state am I, because of the Beduin girl!
She met me in the narrow path,
And the ring on her finger sparkled. [301]
She left the lad standing, so that he flew into a rage. [152]
In wrath he threw his cap into the fire.

1. El-bedawiye (the Beduin girl) is a frequent subject of the songs of the peasant lads.

4. The sudden change from the first to the third person, is not a rare occurrence in such songs.

5. Respecting this cap compare No. 57, note on l. 4.

[P.84 is blank]

8:Schaefer A-8 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

106.

"Love . . . is not Provoked."

539x

Jealous women attempt to blacken a lover in the eyes of his sweetheart. 152

En-nas 'alû-li: ḥabîbik kwoiyis —
'ultš: ni, ma-lo?
'alu-mḥanni yemîno —
'ultš: wi-šmalo!
'alu: beyi'la' u-yilbis —
'ultš: min-malo!
'alu: beyâkul melabbis —
'ultš: hanîyâ-lo!
'alu: da fi er-radîye —
'ultš: mîn ṭalo?
Rûḥu, ya 'awâzil,
u-baṭṭalu di-l-'ôl!
illa ma'â laḥz,
yirmi kullš min ṭalo!

People said to me: Thy lover is handsome —
I said: Yes, what is the matter with him?
They said: He colors his right hand with henna — [302]
I said: His left also!
They said: He makes many changes in his dress —

539
152

I said: With his own money!
They said: He eats sweets —
I said: May they agree with him!
They said: He is ill-natured —
I said: Who has laid hold of him?
Be gone, you jealous creatures,
And cease your talk!
Unless you do, you will learn that his glance
Vanquishes everyone who lays hold of him!

302
157

1. He is an effeminate fop! The dyeing of certain portions of the hands and feet, with the leaves of the henna shrub (Lawsonia inermis), customary among the women and children, is considered, when practiced by men, a sign of effeminacy.

5. He is a dandy.

7. He has a sweet-tooth.

10. That is to say: Who provoked him? He must have had cause for being unpleasant. Maḥmūd interpreted this line as: "min fīkum misik fī" that is to say, "Which of you has laid hold of him."

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

121.

Jealousy.

*589
152

Ya abyaḍ el-bīḍ, ʾul-li wiš garaḥ ḫaddak,
garḥ es-sikkīn wala munyati ʿaḍḍak?
Sāyi ʿalēk en-nabi, we-sāyi ʿalēk rabbak
ma tiḫša ʾ elnēn, wa-ḫyati ʿala ʾalbak.

Thou fairest of the fair, what has wounded thy cheek?
Is it a stab from a knife or has my desire bitten thee?
— — I adjure thee by the Prophet and I adjure thee by thy Lord,
That thou love not two at once, for my life hangs on thy heart.

1 He does not speak out the suspicion which leads to the following.

4 The conclusion probably means: My life hangs upon thy faithfulness.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

130.

Remorse.

Yāna, yāna min ṛarāmo, yāne!
Ṣabaḥet ʿēnēye mis-sahar dablāne.
Sanatēn wana taḥtē ḍill ḥirāmo.
Hāṣimt ummi wabāye ʿala šāno.
Ya mīn yeṣallaḥni dana-l-ṛaḍbāne.

Oh, in what a state, what a state am I, because of my burning love for him!
In the morning my eyes are dull for lack of sleep.
For two years I have been under the shadow of his blanket.
I fell out with my mother and my father for his sake.
Oh, who will comfort me? I am so vexed!

1. What consequences my love has entailed!

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

with beauty-spots, her tender limbs can scarcely support all her heavy ornaments of gold and silver, her armlets, bracelets, anklets, crown, hair-chains, and other trinkets. The silken jacket falls smoothly over her breast, that scarcely as yet shows any swelling. The doll-bride blushes in childish modesty, and, instead of her husband, not seldom wishes—her playthings. He, however, intimates to her, in the name of God, the all-merciful, that he has become her husband. If the bridegroom has had reason to be satisfied with his bride, the women who have been in attendance on the pair utter cries of pleasure, and the joy passes through the whole house, and extends to the people collected below. Ceremonies very similar were customary in the middle ages also among our German forefathers.

Early on the morning after this "night of access" there is much congratulation in the house of feasting; the guests receive coffee, and are sprinkled with rose-water, which they rub on their hair, their beards, faces, and hands. The ancient Egyptians used to anoint themselves with ointments, but this is no longer practised. On this day the bridegroom takes a walk in the open air in his red coat with some of his comrades and sings pious songs; for three days or more he goes about without engaging in any occupation, and at this time displays an extraordinarily serious mien.

A man that marries a second time invites only his nearer relatives and friends, or a scribe, to the betrothal feast in his house. Thereupon the marriage contract is drawn up, the dowry paid, a prayer uttered, and he has now free access to his betrothed.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

A shrill cry, as loud as the female falsetto can produce, pierces the air, first one, then another, then several, then ever so many. A soul has departed. The cry was the wail of sorrow uttered by the women concerned, and at the same time the signal which brings up crowds of women to lament along with them. On the street, before the house of mourn-

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

764 ing, a long row of straw mats and carpets is laid, on which
152 sit many men silently smoking their chibooks. Some men and boys, connections of the departed, run to and fro on the street uttering cries of grief and covering their faces with their hands. "Oh, my father," they cry (or "mother," "brother," &c., as the case may be), "Oh, my sorrow, my death; oh, despair; oh, my strength; oh, camel of my house" [825] (camel as a symbol of strength or support). Friends show their sympathy and attempt to give consolation, but even men, [562] at other times so undemonstrative, weep loudly and give themselves up to grief. What, then, is to be expected of the women, with their more easily excited feelings? They put on the dirtiest dark-blue dresses they can find, loosen their hair, and display their breasts, smear these and their faces with filth, pluck out their hair and tear their own flesh in a frenzy of grief. All order ceases, the loud outcry is raised again and again by the mourning-women hired for the purpose, and those who come to give consolation and show their sympathy go beyond the real mourners and join the hundred-voiced chorus. It was customary among the ancient Egyptians, [171] and also among the Jews, to indulge in these loud lamentations, to smear themselves with filth, and to hire mourning-women. The Prophet strictly forbade it, but the Egyptian women will not let themselves be deprived of these ancestral methods of expressing their grief.

764 Scarcely have the eyes of the beloved dead been closed and his head turned towards Mecca, when preparations are begun for getting the corpse out of the house. The ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, retained the body at least seventy days in the house for the purpose of embalming it, before it was placed in the tomb. All the former repose and dignity of the Oriental are now gone; beside the dead body are found only loud despair and headlong haste. The doctor [693] or corpse-inspector is first sent for before waiting for the first traces of the phenomena of death, and he must give permission for the burial of the body while it is yet warm. Other messengers have already purchased the linen for the shroud, while outside, the grave-digger is already preparing the last

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

bouring court-yard, drinking coffee and enveloped in clouds of tobacco-smoke. At the entrance or exit of a sympathizing neighbour, though he has merely come to sip a small cupful of coffee, the mourners rise and are addressed with such customary phrases of consolation as, "Such is life; but you are still alive yourself." General and individual conversations go on, in which some of the mourners take an active part, while others, bathed in tears, sit dumb in a corner. In an adjoining room lean schoolmasters occupy themselves with chanting the "book that cannot be doubted," or murmur a three-thousand-fold "Allah," in order to induce God to pity the poor soul of him who has gone to his rest. This mourning reception with coffee lasts for three days if the deceased was grown up, and the near relatives and friends remain together even during the night and take a common meal.

On the following days we hear in the house of mourning such a sorrowful, slow, monotonous song of lamentation, uttered in a low tone by a company of women, and mingled with weeping and sobbing, that it thrills painfully through bone and marrow. Thus for years does a mother or wife bewail one whom she has loved and lost, on certain days of the week, or on certain days of the year consecrated to the memory of the dead, collecting her female friends, relatives, and neighbours, and especially practised mourning women, in order to relieve her sorrowful heart, and to have the virtues of the deceased duly sung; while the men gather round them a company of their friends and cause the Koran to be read in memory of their lost ones. Among the ancient Egyptians similar mourning hymns were sung during the period of seventy days that the body was being embalmed. The great festivals also do not pass without visits being made to the graves of dear ones, as we have seen above.

Thus does Islam honour its dead.

[pp. 204–408 not Processed]